

Anthony Philip Heinrich

## **The Ornithological Combat of Kings**

**By David Barron**

Anthony Philip Heinrich was a central figure in American musical life in the first half of the nineteenth century. (See also New World Records 80467-2 *The Flowering of Vocal Music in America*, and 80257-2 *The Wind Demon and Other Mid-Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*.)

It is extremely unlikely...that there was any one in private life in America at that time whose knowledge of the various phases of American life was greater, whose acquaintance with representative people (particularly in his own field of music, both in Europe and America) was broader, or whose life, even into old age, was characterized by more varied and vital experience.

Heinrich's career as composer, violinist, and pianist took him to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, into the Kentucky wilderness, and to Boston, New York, London, Graz, and Prague. With his violin he led the first known performance of a Beethoven symphony in America (the First, in Lexington, Kentucky, on November 12, 1817). He was chairman of the organizational meeting of the New York Philharmonic Society (April, 1842). He participated in concerts with all the best musicians of the time: with members of the Music Fund Society of Philadelphia, organized by Benjamin Carr and Charles F. Hupfeld; with members of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston; and with the orchestras of Drury Lane and Vauxhall Gardens in London.

Although Heinrich had studied violin and piano in his youth, he was essentially self-taught. Nevertheless, he became America's dominant composer in mid-nineteenth century. He was considered America's first "professional" composer, and very early in his career critics termed him "the Beethoven of America." Unlike that of most American composers of the period, Heinrich's reputation extended beyond this country. He was acquainted with Mendelssohn, and the once highly popular opera composer Heinrich Marschner praised Heinrich's compositions with great insight:

A character, originality and solidity, appear throughout your works; and nowhere do you imitate the inflated exhibitions of superficiality and shallowness, perceptible in many modern Italian and, alas! also French works at the present day. Although you are sometimes tempted through your originality, to offer the performers too great difficulties, and to require of the human voice too extensive a

compass! Still the originality, and the deeply poetic ideas, which are developed in your compositions, repay the painstaking to master them; and are a splendid testimonial of German talent in the West.

In 1836 Heinrich achieved critical success at a concert in Graz, Austria, in which four of the six compositions were his. His international reputation was acknowledged by his inclusion in Gustav Schilling's *Enzyklopädie* the same year and confirmed in François-Joseph Fétis' *Biographie universelle des musiciens*. . . in 1839. Near the end of Schilling's entry we find:

In his more recent compositions for full (often overfull) orchestra, he is distinctly individual, particularly in regard to rhythm; and his descriptive notes, both English and German, disclose something of genius, scarcely to be expected from one of his education.

After many years of constant travel Heinrich established residence in New York City in 1837. Except for a trip to Boston in 1846 and a stay in Europe of about three years toward the end of his life, he spent the rest of his life in New York. It was here that, because of his white hair and advancing age, he came to be generally known as Father Heinrich. In 1842 Heinrich's Grand Musical Festival took place in New York, with seven of thirteen compositions his own. This was the first concert in America in which he was the featured composer. The concert generated much excitement because of the expected size of the performance forces: an orchestra of a hundred and a chorus of sixty were projected, although it was reported that the orchestra numbered only forty at the performance. One critic declared that this concert, with a thousand people in attendance, was the "first American Musical Festival."

Heinrich's greatest success occurred on May 6, 1846, when an all-Heinrich benefit concert was given in New York. The concert included a great variety of works: six songs (one with orchestra), an orchestral overture, and two works for vocal solos, chorus, and orchestra. The response of the audience of about fifteen hundred was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. A member of the audience stated that "such yelling, screaming, sneering, laughing and stamping: such showers of bouquets and wreaths, were never before seen or heard on a similar occasion." And from another:

After his pieces had been loudly and enthusiastically applauded, he was called to appear in front of the platform, and receive the warmhearted greeting of his friends—(everybody in the house was his friend; if you had said to any individual that he was not, he would have insulted you)....

As for the music, the critics seemed to agree that Heinrich was guided by an eccentric muse:

Much of the music is truly magnificent and grand; but in the midst of this sublimity and grandeur, we are sometimes startled by the quaintest and oddest passages we ever heard. There is certainly a wonderful deal of originality in all of

Mr. H. 's compositions, and the most fantastic parts are always artistically correct, and perfectly descriptive of their subject.

Another critic states that Heinrich

has evidently developed in close conjunction with sublimity the manifestations of a full, joyous and unrestrainable mirthfulness, which breaks out in most grotesque and unexpected fashion—thus helping to keep Nature's face decked with smiles. Heinrich is undoubtedly ahead of the age; and we believe that his music will be far more popular long after he is dead than now.

Heinrich's compositions

could have been written by none but a man of the profoundest musical genius. Altogether, when we consider the variety of pieces and subjects introduced into this mammoth Concert, and remember that they are all the work of a single mind, we cannot but admit that that mind is a most extraordinary one.

A month after the all-Heinrich concert in New York, Boston honored him with a benefit. Many of the compositions heard at the New York benefit were produced again in this concert, though fewer were done, since pieces by Rossini, A. U. Hayter, and Weber were mixed in. The concert was likewise a success, but not as a great a one, due to lack of rehearsal, the level of performance was much lower than in New York. This problem plagued Heinrich continually; there were no orchestras in America at this time capable of properly executing Heinrich's extremely complex music—at least not with the amount of rehearsal time normally provided. John Sullivan Dwight, soon to be America's leading music critic, wrote about the music performed in Boston:

[That] it was swarming with ideas as beautiful and palpable as most modern music; that there were passages of very grand and impressive harmony; that there was nothing superficial, weak or false in the manner in which the themes were wrought out; that it was thorough, artistlike and learned composition; and so far entitled to respect as a whole, while here and there in passages, the effect upon the mind was as of glimpses of something truly great. But we did suspect a want of poetic or dramatic unity in the largest pieces. Beautiful details, sudden fancies, shifting without end, would continually fix attention; but it was not so obvious whither they were leading; no unitary design appeared to cover them. This might have been the fault of performance merely, and not intrinsic to the music.

From neither the New York nor the Boston concert did Heinrich receive much “benefit.” As he neared seventy, Heinrich was making plans for a last visit to Bohemia, his birthplace. Here he planned to give a collection of his works to the National Museum of Bohemia in Prague and to seek performances. To raise money for the trip, Heinrich presented his Grand Valedictory Concert at Metropolitan Hall in New York on April 21, 1853. Along with works by William Vincent Wallace, E. J. Loder, Hobbs, Weber, and Mozart, five compositions by Heinrich were planned. Lack of rehearsal forced

cancellation of two of his four orchestral pieces. Although the notices were sympathetic to Father Heinrich, the results of his last major concert in America must have been a great personal disappointment.

Heinrich's career was crowned with three concerts at Prague in 1857. The third was an all-Heinrich program of major orchestral works that was both a public and a critical success. Here, perhaps for the first time in his career, the orchestra was properly rehearsed and the performances considered excellent. In October, 1859, Heinrich was back in New York. His age must have begun to affect him, for little is known about his activities in the ensuing months. Following an illness of several months, Heinrich died at eighty on May 3, 1861, in poverty and neglect despite his notable career.

Heinrich's career is all the more fascinating when one realizes that he made his decision to become a composer in a Kentucky log cabin as he was nearing forty. He was born on March 11, 1781, in Schönbüchel in the German-speaking part of Bohemia. At nineteen he inherited the house, property, and business of his wealthy uncle, a wholesale dealer in linen, thread, wine, and other goods. Heinrich apparently enjoyed being the head of the business, especially as it afforded him many opportunities for travel. It was on one of these trips that he acquired his cherished Cremona violin.

Heinrich's first trip to America, in 1805, appears unconnected with business. However, during this trip the business began to suffer because of the depression brought on by the Napoleonic wars. Heinrich returned to Bohemia to save his business and clear his name of questions of dishonesty. In 1810 he was again in America, trying to revive his business by exporting Bohemian glassware. But the Austrian financial crash in 1811 dealt the final blow to his business and fortune. Following an abortive business venture in Philadelphia (1816-17) and the death of his wife, a Bostonian, he remained in America to embark on a musical career. From this point to his death, in spite of continual financial distress and insecurity he never wavered from his desire to be a musician.

In 1810, on his previous trip to Philadelphia, Heinrich had served without salary as director of music at the Southwark Theatre. Now, in Philadelphia again in 1817, he decided on a musical career and was almost immediately offered the post of director of music at the only theater in Pittsburgh. He accepted and made the three-hundred-mile trip by foot through the wilderness from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, which in 1817 was on the frontier. When Heinrich arrived he found that financial difficulties at the theater had forced cancellation of his contract, so he turned south. After a four hundred-mile trip down the Ohio River, he continued to Lexington, Kentucky, apparently arriving in late October or early November, 1817. During his first winter in Kentucky, Heinrich became quite ill. In the spring of 1818, when he was well again, he withdrew from the musical society of Lexington, Frankfort, and Louisville and went to live in a log cabin in the woods around Bardstown. This was a significant moment in Heinrich's life, for here he paused to study and instruct himself in the art of music by improvising on the violin, and finally to write down these expressions as vocal, piano, and violin compositions.

There is little doubt that Heinrich's encounter with the frontier, the wilderness, and the natural wonders of a recently born nation—and especially his encounter with the American Indian—was the decisive stimulus in his sudden urge for creative expression. It is not difficult to imagine the shock that a once wealthy and cosmopolitan but now poor and homeless European suffered as he made his solitary sevenhundred-mile journey along the frontiers of America, not knowing where it would finally lead him. Beginning with his first compositions in Kentucky and continuing throughout the rest of his life, Heinrich attempted to express in music his American experience. When one realizes that he was trying to depict the wild and rough quality of the America that he had experienced, much contemporaneous writing about his music makes perfect sense: “originality, “sublimity and grandeur,” “the quaintest and oddest passages. . . ever heard.” And to quote Dwight: “Beautiful details, sudden fancies, shifting without end . . . but it was not so obvious whither they were leading; no unitary design appeared to cover them.” Could this be a description of the America that Heinrich knew?

For Heinrich, an essential element in his new life was his Americanism. His numerous patriotic and nationalistic titles and texts are not only a reflection of the times but also a personal testimony of a very enthusiastic feeling for this country. Heinrich wished to honor America and to be an honor to America. In his own words, if he were able “to create but one single *Star* in the *West*, no one would ever be more proud than himself, to be called an *American Musician*.”

Heinrich, who consistently rewrote his pieces, was nonetheless a prolific composer: a hundred and fifty songs, of which over a hundred were published; forty works for vocal ensemble and/or chorus (twenty-five with piano accompaniment, ten with orchestra); six chamber works; thirty-six orchestral works; and close to a hundred works for solo piano. The sources of his musical style are in Haydn and to some extent in Beethoven, but with the ornateness of Italian opera and often a freer use of melodic and harmonic chromaticism. Heinrich's melodic style was strongly influenced by Classical dance music, and melodic quotation played an important role in his compositional technique, particularly self-quotation and the quotation of popular patriotic tunes like “Hail Columbia,” “Yankee Doodle,” and “America.”

Heinrich's music exemplifies the Romantic view of art as self-expression. Many of his works, including numerous autobiographical songs and descriptive compositions, can be traced to specific experiences and events during his life. The frontier spirit is reflected in the title of his first major publication, *The Dawning of Music in Kentucky or the Pleasures of Harmony in the Solitude of Nature* (1820), a large, ambitious, and varied collection of songs and pieces for piano and violin without precedent in American Publishing.

Like many other nineteenth-century composers, Heinrich was especially drawn to descriptive music. From his frontier experiences, the American Indian made the deepest impression. Nine of his orchestral works are descriptive of the Indian, and his first composition conceived for orchestra concerned the Indian (*Pushmataha, a Venerable Chief of a Western Tribe of Indians* (1831). According to William Treat Upton (see Bibliography), Heinrich was the first to attempt a serious musical treatment of the

American Indian, at any rate in the larger forms. One of America's natural wonders was orchestrally described in *The War of the Elements* and the Thundering of Niagara, and Heinrich's patriotism found expression in, among other works, *The Jubilee*, a large composition for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra, which traces the history of America from the Pilgrims to victory in the Revolution. Two other descriptive works for orchestra were the result of his friendship with John James Audubon; *The Columbiad, or Migration of American Wild Passenger Pigeons*, and *The Ornithological Combat of Kings, or The Condor of the Andes and the Eagle of The Cordilleras*.

Heinrich composed for a wide variety of performance mediums, frequently employing the same musical materials in different mediums. Since he was a violinist and pianist and his first creative efforts were improvisations on the violin, it is not surprising that the majority of his works exhibit strong instrumental bias. Although he wrote many excellent songs and piano pieces, he was a writer for orchestra by temperament and choice. He wrote for a large orchestra, with scores employing up to forty-four individual parts. The years 1834-35 and 1845-47 were the most productive of orchestral works.

In 1846 Heinrich declared that his “Symfonie of the *Condor*” was his greatest work. He was apparently referring to the work as represented on this record. In its original form—now lost—it employed both voices and orchestra and was referred to by Heinrich as either a “concerto grosso oratoriale” or a “concerto grosso vocale.” In its vocal form it was completed on June 6, 1837, in Bordeaux. At some point Heinrich must have decided that he preferred the work in a purely instrumental form. Although only the “concerto grosso oratoriale” is listed in his *Presentazioni musicali* (1845), in 1846 he is clearly discussing the instrumental version when he says that he has “worked it over *six times* and it is now the *seventh time* that I recast and recopy this stupendous production. . . .”<sup>11</sup> It must have been around this time that he arrived at the final title for the work: “The Ornithological Combat of Kings, or, The Condor of the Andes and the Eagle of the Cordilleras. A grand symphony. Extracted and arranged for a full orchestra, with some deviations from a descriptive concerto grosso vocale of the same title and subject.” The orchestral score is dated New York, 1847; a date of 1856 at the end of the score music indicate the final revisions.

The only known performance of even part of *The Ornithological Combat of Kings* . . . prior to that by the Syracuse Symphony in 1978 occurred on June 10, 1836, in Graz, when the Styrian Musik-Verein presented one movement of “The Combat of the Condor (Der Kampf des Condor),” as he called the work at that time. The work was not yet complete, and Heinrich must have produced a version without voices especially for this concert. On the same day as the concert, Heinrich gave the following history of the event:

The first movement of the symphony, *The Combat of the Condor*, obtained a full band rehearsal in the capital of Styria viz. Gratz, by the highly talented members and artists of its Musik-Verein under the direction of Anselm von Hüttenbrenner, Esqr. The gentlemen of the orchestra went through this introductory movement twice very handsomely through, namely on the 25th May, 1836. On the 7th of June another rehearsal took place, but having only obtained a few violin performers, and those

mostly strangers to their parts, there was great deficiency in the effect. The actual concert took place on the 10th of June following, when this first movement met with public introduction; however, as there were by far too few violin performers and basses, and again, some new gentlemen, not enlisted before, the author must confess that he suffered by it. To cope with the powerful accompaniments of so many bass and wind instruments, this symphony will positively demand 8 or 12 first violins and a corresponding number of other stringed performers, knowing their parts; in fact, the more violins, tenors, violoncellos and basses, the better.

A look at the orchestration shows that Heinrich is absolutely correct in demanding as many string players as possible. For Heinrich this is a typical orchestration, thick and very heavy with wind instruments. The orchestra employs thirty-seven parts: piccolo; two flutes; two oboes; two clarinets; two bassoons; contrabassoon; four horns; four trumpets; alto, tenor and bass trombones; serpent; ophecleide; bass horn; triangle; cymbals; gong; side drum; bass drum; timpani; first and second violins; first and second violas; first and second cellos; and string bass.

In spite of the problems, this must have been a great moment for Heinrich; it was the first performance ever of one of his symphonic compositions—a work conceived for orchestra, not an arrangement of a piano piece. The critic was quite impressed despite the poor performance:

The most striking achievement. . . was the Symphony, *The Combat of the Condor*...your reviewer dares not maintain that this composition will please every ear. Something peculiar in its design and treatment distinguishes it from everything that has yet come into our sphere of enjoyment. For as already intimated Heinrich's muse is a daughter of Nature, but not of that Nature whose quiet, idyllic grace possesses us all unconsciously. He has sought out Nature in her workshop where she produces her mighty works. . . . 13

Generally speaking, Heinrich's descriptive music may be divided into two types. One is similar in procedure to the numerous “battle” compositions of the period, in which specific events are described by appropriate music. A good example is Heinrich's piano composition “The Minstrel's March, or Road to Kentucky,” published in *The Western Minstrel* in 1820. In this piece Heinrich musically describes the trip from Philadelphia to Kentucky. Among the passages there is an accelerating descent down Market Street Hill followed by a sudden stop at the Toll Gate. At Lancaster there is a “stop ad lib.,” apparently depending on whether the stagecoach needed to stop there.

The second type includes *The Ornithological Combat of Kings*. . . and is best described as a less detailed program that will set the listener fantasizing about the subject of the composition. The subject was usually the inspiration for the composer as well. In the case of *Combat* this was undoubtedly true, since Heinrich was a friend of Audubon's and Audubon must have stimulated Heinrich's imagination. Unlike “The Minstrel's March,” there are no descriptive words written through the score of *The Ornithological Combat of Kings*. . . Heinrich gives only titles to the movements and leaves it to the listener to

imagine the specific events as they might occur in the music. The first movement is headed “The Conflict of the Condor in the Air,” the second “The Repose of the Condor,” the third “The Combat of the Condor on Land,” and the fourth “Victory of the Condor.” The Eagle is mentioned nowhere in the score and may have been an afterthought, as Heinrich was inclined to give his compositions many different titles.

Heinrich was a gregarious man who seemed to inspire admiration and affection in all who knew him. From many of his contemporaries we read similar comments about his personality: “child-like simplicity of character,” “innocent and gentle heart,” “incapable of meanness,” “artless and impulsive,” “a combination of a whimsical sort of self-importance with an effort at becoming modest.” Undoubtedly the most striking aspect of his personality was his total devotion to his music. Here is what two of his contemporaries said of him:

All his long life, Anthony Philippe Heinrich has had one single, absorbing passion, controlling and overpowering all others. Music has been his meat, his drink, and all his pleasure. He talks of nothing else, writes of nothing else. To it his days and nights have been devoted. 14

The soul of music. . . we can detect, and its incarnation always seemed to us to be Father Heinrich. There is music in his joy—there is expression deep, and untranslatable into words, in his rapid and fitful gestures. We love his enthusiasm—love the man—admire the eccentricities of his genius. . . . 15

While there is certainly an element of Romantic exaggeration in the following description, much of it is true to Heinrich's excitable character:

He will certainly die one of these days with his fingers on the instrument keys for such is his feverish devotion to the heavenly science, such his earnest application, that he has absolutely produced a nervous disease in his system, of a singular character. At times the ends of his fingers are so acutely and tingingly sensitive that they will not bear the touch of any object. It seems like driving acute pin points into the flesh, to let his hands touch an instrument. What does the old enthusiast then? suspend his pursuit? Not he! Armed with thick glove finger ends, his hands disdain the confinement of whole mittens he rattle away as industriously as ever—and compose he will—test the capabilities of his notes he would, though each key of ivory were a glowing coal! 16

Heinrich made friends everywhere he went. In Kentucky he lived with the prominent Speed family. It was probably through them that Heinrich met John James Audubon and his wife. A lifelong friendship developed, and at his death Heinrich was buried in the Audubon family vault. Numerous poems were written about him, including one by his friend John Howard Payne, the poet and diplomat. Payne was instrumental in obtaining an audience for Heinrich with President John Tyler, to whom Heinrich wished to dedicate a composition. Heinrich must have had great expectations from the head of state—perhaps a chance for patronage—but he was severely disappointed. John Hill Hewitt,



who was then piano teacher to Tyler's daughter, took Heinrich to meet the president and later wrote a detailed account of the meeting:

At a proper hour we visited the President's mansion, and after some ceremony and much grumbling on the part of the *polite* usher, were shown into the presence of Mr. Tyler, who received us with his usual urbanity. I introduced Mr. Heinrich as a professor of exalted talent and a man of extraordinary genius. The President after learning the object of our visit, which he was glad to learn was not to solicit an office, readily consented to the dedication, and commended the undertaking. Heinrich was elated to the skies, and immediately proposed to play the grand conception, in order that the Chief Magistrate of this great nation might have an idea of its merits.

“Certainly, sir,” said Mr. Tyler; “I will be greatly, pleased to hear it. We will go into the parlor, where there is a piano. and I will have Alice and the ladies present, so that we may have the benefit of their opinion; for, to confess the truth, gentlemen, I am but a poor judge of music. ”

He then rang the bell for the waiter, and we were shown into the parlor, and invited to take some refreshments at the sideboard. The ladies soon joined us, and in a short space of time we were all seated, ready to hear Father Heinrich's composition; I, for the second time, to be gratified. The composer labored hard to give full effect to his weird production; his bald pate bobbed from side to side, and shone like a bubble on the surface of a calm lake. At times his shoulders would be raised to the line of his ears, and his knees went up to the keyboard, while the perspiration rolled in large drops down his wrinkled cheeks.

The ladies stared at the maniac musician, as they, doubtless, thought him, and the president scratched his head, as if wondering whether wicked spirits were not rioting in the cavern of mysterious sounds and rebelling against the laws of acoustics. The composer labored on, occasionally explaining some incomprehensible passage, representing, as he said, the breaking up of the frozen river Niagara, the *thaw* of the ice, and the dash of the mighty falls. *Peace* and *plenty* were represented by soft strains of pastoral music, while the thunder of our naval war-dogs and the rattle of our army musketry told of our prowess on sea and land.

The inspired composer had got about half-way through his wonderful production when Mr. Tyler restlessly arose from his chair, and placing his hand gently on Heinrich's shoulder, said;

“That may all be very fine, sir, but can't you play us a good old Virginia reel?”

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of the musician, he could not have been more astounded. He arose from the piano, rolled up his manuscript, and, taking his hat and cane, bolted towards the door, exclaiming;

“No sir; I never plays dance music!”

I joined him in the vestibule, having left Mr. Tyler and family enjoying a hearty laugh at the “maniac musician's” expense.

As we proceeded along Pennsylvania Avenue, Heinrich grasped my arm convulsively, and exclaimed; “Mein Got (sic) in himmel [(sic)]! de peeples vot made Yohn Tyler Bresident ought to be hung! He knows no more apout music than an oyshter!”<sup>17</sup>

Heinrich strikes one as a true individualist, something one tends to think of as distinctly American. No school of younger composers took Heinrich as its model; it is almost impossible to imagine. There is something very brash (and reminiscent of Charles Ives) in the attitude a contemporary attributed to him:

Old and deep musicians give him credit for wonderful power and originality, and nothing delights Anthony more than when he has struck off a composition which those whippersnappers who affect to be his critic cannot read, much less play. 18

Unquestionably, Heinrich was an opportunist and a good publicist for himself—he fostered the Romantic image of himself as a log-cabin composer throughout his life—yet he was so open and honest about it that he never appeared self-serving.

A final quote from a letter Heinrich wrote to a friend pictures him in a moment of doubt, but still with enough courage to continue his love affair with music:

I am trotting about from morning till night, teaching little misses on the piano forte, for small quarter money, often unpaid. Sometimes I have had good cause to sink under my exertions, but still my spirits remain buoyant on the heated and dusty surface of the summer- earth. At night, I close my toilsome labors and lonely incubations (sic), on a broken, crazy, worn-out, feeble, and very limited octaved piano forte. As this decrepid instrument has, alas, lost, by moving on the first of May, one of its legs, and many other props and intestines of enchantment, it might be well worth the visit of some curious antiquarian to look at it and hear it. I believe my music runs in the same vein as my letters to you; full of strange ideal somersets and capriccios. Still I hope there may be some method discoverable, some beauty, whether of regular or irregular features. Possibly the public may acknowledge this, when I am dead and gone. I must keep at the work with my best powers, under all discouraging, nay suffering circumstances. The pitcher goes to the well till it breaks, and that I apprehend, will soon be the case with my old shell. It is hard to go out of the world without the least encouragement. 19

## NOTES

*(See Selected Bibliography for Bibliographical Information)*

1 Upton, *Anthony Philip Heinrich*, p. xii.

2 Heinrich's *Scrapbook*, p. 882. The letter, in Heinrich's translation, is dated "Hanover, 10th of May, 1849."

3 Translated in Upton, p. 144.

4 Upton, p. 188. From a letter written by Henry T. Drowne.

5 *Scrapbook*, p. 878. From a letter written by Mary E. Hewitt.

6 *Scrapbook*, p. 320.

7 *Scrapbook*, p. 320. From *The Tribune*, May 7, 1846.

8 *Scrapbook*, pp. 522-23. From *The Harbinger*, July 4, 1846.

9 In *Regeneration Through Violence*, Richard Slotkin deals at great length with the European's encounter with the New World, its psychological effects, and the resultant myth-building process.

10 *Scrapbook*, pp. 517 ff. In a letter to his friend J.G. L. Libby, a Boston merchant and jeweler, dated July 11, 1846.

11 *Ibid.*

12 This note is attached to the orchestral score.

13 Translation in Upton, p. 143.

14 *Scrapbook*, p. 50. From a review of the Grand Musical Festival, 1842.

15 *Scrapbook*, p. 879. From *Brother Jonathan: A weekly Compend of Belles Lettres and the Fine Arts*, April 16, 1842 (?).

16 *Ibid.*

17 Hewitt, *Shadows on the Wall*, pp. 82-85.

18 *Scrapbook*, p. 879. From *Brother Jonathan...*, April 16, 1842 (?).

19 Quoted in a letter written by Lydia Maria Child to *The Tribune*, where it was published on May 5, 1846. *David Barron is a singer, actor, and musicologist.*

Anthony Philip Heinrich

*The Ornithological Combat of Kings*

or *The Condor of the Andes and the Eagle of the Cordilleras* (Grand Symphony)

1. The Conflict of the Condor in the Air (*Allegro, ma moderato*)...7:06
2. The Repose of the Condor (*Andante sostenuto, quasi adagio*)...5:38
3. The Combat of the Condor on Land (*Allegro*)...6:10
4. Victory of the Condor (*Finale: vivace brillante*)... 6:17 Syracuse Symphony Orchestra  
Christopher Keene, conductor

Night in The Tropics

(Noches de Los Tropicicos)

Two-piano transcription

LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK (1829-1869)

by Richard Jackson

On May 15, 1932, the *New York Herald Tribune* printed an open letter under the heading "Reward for Rediscovery of Early American Work." It was from the composer-conductor Quinto Maganini (1897-1974), and the work he was looking for was Louis Moreau Gottschalk's *Night in the Tropics*, which the letter called the first American symphony ever performed in the United States. Maganini hoped to conduct it the next season with his New York Sinfonietta. He reasoned that the score must have been preserved somewhere because of Gottschalk's great celebrity when he composed the piece in the eighteen-fifties.

The letter had frustrating results. Maganini learned that the score was intact in a private collection in Havana, but he heard a week later that it had been stolen. "I hope my offer of a reward did not prompt this," he said in the *New York Times* report of the incident on August 7, 1932. *Night in the Tropics* was not heard in the United States until 1948, when it was performed in the two-piano setting heard in this recording. To make up for his disappointment Maganini orchestrated the first movement from a piano-solo version and performed and published it. As recorded under the direction of Richard Korn in 1955, it gave us the first indication of what Gottschalk's concerted music might sound like. (Maganini also enthusiastically made four transcriptions of Gottschalk's piano piece "The Banjo," including one for jazz band that was published in 1933 by Carl Fischer. )

The last time any of the symphony had been performed prior to Maganini's inquiries was probably on November 24, 1869. The occasion was the giant festival concert Gottschalk organized and conducted in Rio de Janeiro less than a month before his death on December 18. In fact it was the exhaustive preparations and rehearsal for the concert that fatally weakened him. The scene was the Teatro Lyrico Fluminense, ablaze with gaslights and swathed in bunting and flowers. The Brazilian emperor, Dom Pedro II, and the royal family were in the capacity audience that heard the Andante movement of the symphony. The strenuous program concluded with a new Gottschalk piece dedicated to the emperor. "March Solennelle, pour orchestre et musique militaire," with artillery explosions at the end. The monster concerts Gottschalk staged from 1858 to 1869 in the West Indies and South America were musical-patriotic spectacles that galvanized public support through local participation and the prospect of international publicity. They gave Gottschalk full rein as heroic engineer and purveyor of the sublime.

The forces for the Rio concert included the official bands of the Brazilian army, the Imperial Navy, the National Guard, and the War Arsenal, lent by the emperor; a professional symphony orchestra of seventy, and two additional orchestras composed of Rio's leading nonprofessionals. Gottschalk's podium was at the front center of the stage, and the players were on tiers rising to the rear of the stage; several assistant conductors were placed strategically among the players to follow Gottschalk's beat and help keep the ensemble together. In all there were six hundred and fifty musicians on the stage. The first full-scale performance of the symphony was also given at a monster concert, one of the earliest and most successful Gottschalk staged, on February 17, 1860, at the twenty-three-hundred-seat Tacon Theater in Havana. Military bands and orchestra consisted of about six hundred and fifty players and included a battery of native percussion instruments played by the king of the Cuban settlement of French blacks. "And that is not all, *diablo!!*" said *La Prensa de la Habana*. There were vocal soloists, a chorus, and the touring Italian opera company of the impresario Max Maretzek, Gottschalk's friend and business acquaintance from New York. The choral finale to Gottschalk's opera *Charles IX* was performed and his new one-act opera *Escenas Campestres* ("Country Scenes"), which, like the symphony, was a compliment to the Cuban audience in its use of folk-style rhythms and tunes and native percussion. The total forces in the concert numbered about eight hundred.

As usual, Gottschalk worked himself into a frenzy, going without sleep for seventy-two hours while he handcopied thousands of individual parts for the players. He promoted the concert shrewdly, beginning by dedicating it to Consul- General José Concha, the island's current dictator, appointed by Spain. The press was delirious:

Just *reading* the program makes one's ears buzz. What will the effect of so much of an uproar within the walls of the theater do?...young ladies [should] take some smelling salts with them: we predict that there will be faintings.

Exactly when and where Gottschalk composed the symphony is unknown, but it was probably 1859 on Martinique and Guadeloupe. Gottschalk made voyages to Cuba and the West Indies in 1854 and 1857, the second a leisurely concert tour with the fourteen-

year-old soprano Adelina Patti (1843-1919) that lasted for two years and included six months in Venezuela. Salvatore Patti took his daughter back to New York at the end of 1858 to launch her brilliant operatic career, but Gottschalk stayed on to wander the Caribbean. It was four years before he resumed his American career.

The tropics had a seductive influence on Gottschalk, and he might easily have remained there. He loved the languorous life and the native customs, which, he later wrote in *Notes of a Pianist*, if not precisely virtuous, were nevertheless “terribly attractive”:

I have roamed at random under the blue skies of the tropics, indolently permitting myself to be carried away by chance, giving a concert wherever I found a piano, sleeping wherever the night over-took me. . . . Sometimes the idol of an ignorant “pueblo,” to whom I have played some of their simple ballads, I have stopped for five, six, or eight months among them, putting off my departure from day to day, and have at last resolved seriously to go no further. . . I forgot the world and lived only for two large black eyes. . . . All this is frightfully immoral, I know, but life in the savannas of the tropics, in the midst of a half-civilized and voluptuous race, cannot be that of a London cockney, a Parisian idler, or an American Presbyterian.

But the attraction was deeper. He was a child—or grandchild—of the tropics by lineage. His maternal grandparents, Camille and Josephine Deynaud Brusle', were born and raised in Haiti, immigrating with thousands of others to New Orleans after their families were killed in the slave rebellion of the seventeen-nineties.

During 1859 Gottschalk concertized and taught in Fort-de-France and St. -Pierre, Martinique, the latter known then as the Paris of the Antilles, where he was impressed with the handsome fully subsidized theater, and in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe. At a July concert for the poor in Basse-Terre he performed a solo-piano version of the symphony, though perhaps only the first movement. In Fort-de-France he participated in a boisterous three-day festival of balls and speeches celebrating the unveiling of a granite statue of Napoleon's first empress, Josephine, a native of Martinique. He noted in his diary that his fee for this appearance was the equivalent of twelve hundred 1859 dollars.

Gottschalk also mentioned the sweltering August heat, in which he was bombarded night and day by the sounds of *bamboula* drums played by the singing and parading hordes of tourist blacks. In the official programs of the festival he heard music that was more polite if rather odd. For example, the “Miserere” from Verdi's *Il Trovatore* was sung by the student choir of the local seminary accompanied by military band with saxophone solo.

Each movement of the symphony may have been composed separately and the two joined later. An early catalogue of Gottschalk's works lists *La Nuit dans les tropiques*, *symphonie* pour orchestre for 1858 and *Une Fête sous les tropiques*, *symphonie* pour orchestre for 1859, the latter title not among Gottschalk's known works. In the first performance of the symphony the movements were given similar names, the first “La

Mèche” and the second “Una Fiesta Criolla.” Documentation of the work is plagued by a confusion of names, terminology, and languages, so that it is not possible to state the original title. Gottschalk made no mention of the work in his diary.

Ninety years after its composition the manuscript score of the symphony was acquired by the New York Public Library, and Howard Shanet performed it with the Columbia Symphony in New York on May 5, 1955. A trimmed version was published by Boosey and Hawkes in 1965 and was recorded by Maurice Abravanel and others. Andre Kostelanetz made it a repertory item and conducted it regularly in the Promenade Concerts of the New York Philharmonic.

The two-piano setting performed in this recording was never published. It is by Gottschalk's Havana friend and fellow composer-pianist Nicolás Ruiz y Espadero (1832- 1890), one of the most famous Cuban musicians of his time, and by the pianist-scholar John Kirkpatrick (1905-). The first movement is a broad lyrical statement in the grand Romantic tradition of Gottschalk's friend and mentor Hector Berlioz (whose prototypical *Symphonie Fantastique* was premiered in 1829, the year of Gottschalk's birth; both men died in 1869). It is distinctive, however, and speaks in the composer's own voice. There are no Americanisms. The second movement is a rumba, a Cuban dance unknown in the United States until the twentieth century. Near the climax Gottschalk slyly introduces a little fugue without losing a beat of the dance rhythm.

RICHARD JACKSON is *curator of the Americana collection* at the New York Public Library. In addition to numerous articles and reviews, Jackson's publications include a bibliography, *United States Music (1973)*, and *The Little Book of Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1976)*, coedited with Neil Ratliff. Jackson also compiled the program and wrote the notes for New World Records 80220-2, *Angels'Visits: and Other Vocal Gems of Victorian Americana*, and 80206-2, which contains piano music by nineteenth-century American composers.

ANTHONY PHILIP HEINRICH

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## LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK

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*Escenas Campestres*: five pieces for piano four-hands, Vienna State Opera Orchestra; Berlin Symphony; Igor Buketoff and Samuel Adler

conducting; Eugene List, piano; others. Turnabout TV-S34440-42.

*Music for Piano Four Hands and Two Pianos*. Eugene List and assisting artists. Vanguard VS D-71 218.

*Night in the Tropics*. Utah Symphony. Maurice Abravanel conducting. Vanguard VRS-1103; Everyman Classics SRV-275-SD.

“Romance.” *The Wind Demon and Other Mid-Nineteenth-Century' Piano Music*. Ivan Davis, piano. New World Records 80257-2.

*the artists*

Christopher Keene made his conducting debut with the Netherlands Opera in Amsterdam. The 1978-79 season marked his fourth as Music Director of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra. An internationally noted conductor of opera and a specialist in the preparation of new works, he conducted world premieres of operas in Berlin, Houston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia.

*The Syracuse Symphony Orchestra* was founded in 1961. During its first season it gave four concerts; two seasons later the schedule had grown to eight pairs of subscription concerts, and by 1978 the orchestra and its members were giving 300 concerts annually, and audience attendance had grown to over 350,000. On April 10, 1978, the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra made its Carnegie Hall debut. Since the organization's inception, its musical directors have included Karl Kritz, Frederik Prausnitz, and Christopher Keene.

*Anthony and Joseph Paratore*, born in Boston, studied at Boston University, and at the Juilliard School with Rosina Lhevinne. They made their debut with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops. Their first New York appearance took place at the Grace Raimey Rogers Auditorium of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1973. The Paratores won first prize at the Munich International Competition in 1974. They have performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and their television appearances include the *Today Show* and *Camera Three*. Their performance of Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos, K. 365, with the New York Philharmonic under Pierre Boulez, was also broadcast on national television.

*The Ornithological Combat of Kings*

Producer: Andrew Raeburn

*Recording engineer:* Henry Fogel

Recorded in the Crouse-Hinds Concert Theater of the Civic Center of Onondaga County, Syracuse

*Night in the Tropics*

Producer: Horace Grenell

*Recording engineer:* Stan Tonkel

Recorded at Columbia Recording Studios, 30th Street, New York

*Mixing engineer:* Stan Tonkel

*Tape editor:* Don Van Gordon, Soundwave Recording Studios

*Mastering:* New York Digital Recording, Inc.

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